



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
BUCHAREST • ROMANIA

May 2011



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American Citizen Services eNewsletter

WORLD WIDE TRAVEL ALERT

The U.S. Department of State alerts U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad to the enhanced potential for anti-American violence following recent counter-terrorism activity in Pakistan. Given the uncertainty and volatility of the current situation, U.S. citizens in areas where recent events could cause anti-American violence are strongly urged to limit their travel outside of their homes and hotels and avoid mass gatherings and demonstrations. U.S. citizens should stay current with media coverage of local events and be aware of their surroundings at all times. **This Travel Alert expires August 1, 2011.**

U.S. Embassy operations in affected areas will continue to the extent possible under the constraints of any evolving security situation. U.S. government facilities worldwide remain at a heightened state of alert. These facilities may temporarily close or periodically suspend public services to assess their security posture. In those instances, U.S. Embassies and Consulates will make every effort to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens. U.S. citizens abroad are urged to monitor the local news and maintain contact with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Media coverage of local events may cause family and friends to become concerned for their loved ones traveling and residing abroad. We urge U.S. citizens to keep in regular contact with family and friends. U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad are encouraged to enroll in the Department of State's *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)*, to receive the latest travel updates and information and to obtain updated information on travel and security issues.

U.S. citizens without Internet access may register directly with the appropriate U.S. Embassy or Consulate. By enrolling, U.S. citizens make it easier for the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to contact them in case of emergency.

Travel information is also available at <http://www.travel.state.gov>. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States

All **non-emergency** ACS services (renewal of U.S. passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, notarial, etc.) are provided by appointment **ONLY**.

Please follow [this link](#) to make an appointment with the consular section staff.

AMERICAN CITIZEN SERVICES

Address: St. Filipescu 26, Bucharest

E-mail: acsbucharest@state.gov

Tel: +40- 21- 200 3300

Fax: +40- 21- 200 3578

In the event of an emergency involving an American citizen, please, call +40-21-200-3433

For information about public hours, please visit <http://romania.usembassy.gov/acs/index.html>.





TRAVEL.STATE.GOV

A SERVICE OF THE BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS
U.S. Department of State

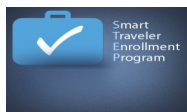
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and Canada or, for callers outside the United States and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444.



For information on "What the Department of State Can and Can't Do in a Crisis," please visit the Bureau of Consular Affairs' website at www.travel.state.gov.

For further information on specific countries, U.S. citizens should consult the Country Specific Information pages, Travel Alerts, and Travel Warnings at www.travel.state.gov as well as the Worldwide Caution. Follow us on Twitter and the Bureau of Consular Affairs' page on Facebook as well.



We continue to encourage all U.S. citizens to *register their trips and residence abroad to facilitate our communications with them in the event of an emergency*. If you have any questions about the *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)*, please, email us at ACSBucharest@state.gov.

What the Department of State Can and Can't Do in a Crisis

What is the Department of State's role during a crisis overseas? Do you always evacuate U.S. citizens during a crisis overseas?

The actions we take depend on the nature of the crisis. In some instances, we may only need to provide information on conditions in the country, such as warning about areas of unrest, how and where to seek help, and other useful advice. In more serious situations, we may recommend that U.S. citizens leave the foreign country, and, if commercial transportation is not available, provide departure assistance, as our resources permit.

What departure assistance do you provide? Why do you tell U.S. citizens they should leave, and then don't offer transportation?

The assistance we provide depends upon the nature of the crisis. Regularly scheduled commercial flights or transportation are always the best option when local communications and transportation infrastructure are intact and operating normally, even if we have advised all U.S. citizens to leave. Our efforts are devoted to keeping the local U.S. citizen community informed of developments and travel options.

If you'd like to learn more about [What the Department of State Can and Can't Do in a Crisis](http://www.travel.state.gov), please visit www.travel.state.gov.



Older Americans Month: Connecting the Community

Greetings,

I am pleased to join millions of our older citizens as they celebrate Older Americans Month. The theme of this year's celebration, "Older Americans: Connecting the Community," recognizes the many ways in which older adults bring inspiration and continuity to the fabric of our communities. Their shared histories, diverse experiences, and wealth of knowledge have made our culture, economy, and local character what they are today. The theme also highlights the many ways technology is helping older Americans live longer, healthier, and more engaged lives.

One of the primary responsibilities of the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs is to ensure the safety and welfare of our fellow citizens overseas. An estimated five million Americans live overseas and another 65 million travel abroad annually, and these numbers continue to increase. This includes a growing community of older Americans who are retiring to another country, cruising the world's oceans, or taking an educational excursion abroad as part of a lifelong learning tour. From Washington, we help prepare you to travel by providing [important information about every country in the world](#) and warning you of the [international financial scams](#) that may target you as you travel. When you travel or live overseas, consular personnel at U.S. embassies, consulates, and consular agencies will advise and help you with important tasks such as replacing a passport or obtaining federal benefits, and will provide guidance and support during a crisis.

As we celebrate Older Americans Month, we encourage our fellow Americans in this growing part of our community to prepare well for their travel abroad. We want your trips or overseas retirement to be as enjoyable as you wish them to be. With that in mind, we hope you will find our [travel advice for older Americans](#) and [information on retiring abroad](#) useful. We wish all older Americans, as well as all those who love and support them, a happy Older Americans Month and safe and enjoyable travels.

Sincerely,

Janice L. Jacobs
Assistant Secretary
Consular Affairs

WE REMIND YOU...

...that for children under age 16, the presence of the child and both parents is normally required at the time of submission of a U.S. passport application.

Unequivocal consent to passport issuance is demonstrated by the parents signing the application form in front of a consular officer.

If there are special circumstances and **both** parents cannot submit the application together, *for example if one parent is not present in country*, the absent parent's notarized [Statement of Consent](#) in English and not older than 90 days, **must** be submitted.



If a parent has **sole custody**, an original or court certified copy of the custody order granting sole custody must be submitted with the application. If one parent is deceased, the death certificate should be submitted.

For more information, please, visit the [Embassy website](#) or email us at ACSBucharest@state.gov.

... that the first step to plan your international trip is to make sure that your passport is valid.



Before you book your tickets, check the expiration dates on your and your family's passports. Renewing passports early can save you both time and money. Remember that ALL American citizens must enter and exit the U.S. on a **valid** U.S. passport, irrespective of any other passports you might hold.

In addition, please note that, although you can submit your application for passport renewal at the U.S. Embassy, all non-emergency U.S. passports are produced in the United States and mailed back to post for delivery to applicants. This process may take up to two weeks, sometimes longer. We kindly request that you take this time into consideration and plan your travel accordingly.

For more information on passport renewal procedures for adults and minors, please, visit the [Embassy website](#).

Decade of Action for Road Safety

May 11, 2011 marks the official launch date of the **Decade of Action for Road Safety**, which was adopted in the March 2010 UN General Assembly resolution on Global Road Safety. The goal of the Decade of Action is to raise awareness of the impacts of road crashes on public health throughout the world and to promote interventions to reduce road crashes by 50% by the Decade's end in 2020. The U.S. Department of State is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other multilateral organizations, with foreign governments, with other U.S. Government agencies, and non-governmental organizations on a number of initiatives to advance international road safety.



For more information, visit [WHO Decade of Action for Road Safety](#).

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Important

The Embassy will be closed on May 30, June 13, **July 8**, August 15, September 5, October 10, November 11, November 24 and December 1 in observance of U.S. and Romanian official holidays. **Please note correction from our April issue — the Embassy will be closed on July 8, not July 4.**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What are the advantages of direct deposit of my benefits into a bank account?

The Embassy is working with the Social Security Administration to set up the option of direct deposit of benefits into bank accounts from Romania. An initial meeting between the Social Security Administration representatives and bank officials took place in March 2011. The Social Security Administration is now waiting on the bank for their approval and acceptance to offer the program, which seems highly likely. We hope to be able to start this program by **September 2011**. *We plan to hold a Town Hall meeting with participation of the representatives from the Social Security Administration in June. We will inform you of date and time of the meeting.*

Getting your Social Security or Supplemental Security Income payment by direct deposit or Direct Express is safer and more reliable, you don't have to worry about your check being lost or stolen and your money is available immediately on your payment date. ***By March 1, 2013, all the beneficiaries will receive their payments electronically and there will be no more paper checks.***

Electronic payments also will provide significant savings to American taxpayers who will no longer incur the \$120 million a year price tag associated with paper checks and save \$1 billion over the next ten years. Eliminating paper checks also will provide positive benefits to the environment, saving 12 million pounds of paper in the first five years alone. To learn more about direct deposit or the Direct Express® Debit MasterCard® card or to apply, visit www.GoDirect.org.

Benefits are paid on the 3rd of the month. If you already receive payment by direct deposit, please check your account after this date. Pension checks are usually received at the Embassy around the 15th day of the month and are processed the next day. Please allow five to seven days beyond this date, for mailing. To find out the date when the checks were mailed out, you may call 021-2003300 ext 1156. If you do not receive your check by the end of the month, you may contact the Embassy to place a complaint of non-receipt of your check and request a replacement by phone at 021-200-3300 ext. 3510 or 3535, by mail or by email at: acsbucharest@state.gov.